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ONE THING AND ANOTHER

Craig Friel

Once more we hear the old, but ever pleasant greeting, "Merry Christmas," and it brings to us a thrill of pleasure now, even as it did in the long ago, although perhaps it's meaning to us changes somewhat with the passing of the years.

To the young folks, it means mostly the exchange of gifts and the round of good times that go with the Christmas holiday, but as we travel life's road farther each year, there comes to us gradually, a different and deeper meaning of the word Christmas, as we more fully realize it's significance.

Originally, "Cristes mass" (the mass or church festival of Christ,) was the English name for the season in which the birth of Christ is commemorated, but it is apparent however, that a festival was celebrated at this season long before it was held sacred as the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Saturnalia of the Romans and the winter festival of the heathen Britons were both celebrated about December 25th; and later, the Roman festival in honor of the sun god, Mithra, was instituted about 273 A D. From the latter, the day came to be known as the 'Birthday of the Unconquered Sun', and after its adoption by the Christian Church in the fourth century as the anniversary of Christ's birth; this name was given a symbolic interpretation.

Paganism seems also to have contributed some of the old customs that have come down to us with Christmas The lighting of the Yule log on Christmas eve, once a widespread European custom, was a function of much importance among the Lithuanians and Letts and their words Christmas Eve literally mean "Log evening." The decoration of churches with the once sacred mistletoe and holly is also a pagan survival, while the sending of gifts may be traced back to the Yule gifts of northern Europe and ancient Rome.

The Christmas tree, an evergreen, lighted by gaily colored candles and hung with ornaments and gifts, is of German origin. Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, who is supposed to come from the far north in his reindeer sledge, laden with toys on Christmas Eve is identified with St. Nicholas or Nicolas, and also with Knecht Ruprecht and Robin Goodfellow.

Traditions prescribe Christmas Eve as the proper time for putting up Christmas greens and it was often considered unlucky to bring holly into the house before that time. Custom varies as to the time of removal of the decorations, but the Christmas season is usually considered to end with the Twelfth Night, although by some it is prolonged to Candlemas. In our home we always take down the decorations the day after New Year.

In later years, music has entered largely into our Christmas celebrations and adds much. Carol singing by the "waifs," strolling street musicians, is an old British custom that has recently been revived in many towns and cities and adds much to the enjoyment of Christmas.

The Christmas card is of modern origin, the first one dating from about 1846, but the custom has grown to huge proportion and I doubt if there is any other agent that spreads joy and gladness like these little tokens of friendship, for it is not, after all, the costly present from a friend at Christmas that brings the real joy, but the reminder that somewhere some one is thinking of us, and takes time to mail us a little card along with a friendly greeting that makes our cares fade away like frost before the morning sun, and makes us thankful for one of life's great blessings—friends.

Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if we could all be for twelve months in the year, like we are for about two weeks before Christmas? In that little time our thoughts seem to turn from "getting," and center on giving and making someone else happy, and then we wake up to the fact that we are about the happiest one in the bunch, and wonder how come, and then maybe it dawns on us that after all, that in trying to make others happy we often find the greatest happiness for ourselves.

The life of Christ, whose birthday we are about to celebrate, was in itself a life of service. His greatest mission on earth it seems to me, was to set us an example, and the feeling of gladness and satisfaction that we experience at this season, when we forget self and work for the happiness of others, seems to strengthen this thought, and maybe we wonder if it is necessary to confine helpful thoughts to Christmas time. Is it?

And now for the old, time worn, but never the less sincere greeting, A Merry Christmas to you all.

SALESMEN WANTED

Men wanted to establish and conduct Rawleigh business in County of Webster. Reliable hustler can start earning $35 weekly and increase rapidly. Write immediately. Rawleigh Co., Dept. WV-63-S, Richmond, Va.

EDITORIAL, MORE OR LESS

Last Saturday I was called down to Charleston to sit in a meeting composed of representatives from the various rod and gun clubs of the state. W. D. McCauley, of Moorefield, of the South Branch Valley Fish and Game Association; T. M. Cheek, of Elkins, of the Randolph Rod and Gun Club; and the writer, of the Marlinton Rod and Gun Club, were the three travelers who came the greater distance to be present. The others were from counties nearer Charleston. The presiding officer was J. P. Rusk, of the Kanawha Game and Fish association. Hon. Andrew Northcott, sat in as representative of the State Game, Fish and Forestry Association.

The meeting was called at the instance of the Kanawha Fish and Game Association. The object was to consult together and find common ground for recommendations to the coming session of the legistiture as to game laws. The recommendations were few in number, but some of them were of major importance.

In order to make a train that would let me home before midnight, the meeting most kindly heard my little piece about the importance of a November 1 to 10 open season, and a uniform open season for all small game. They heard me patiently, adopted the recommendations I asked and let me go.

Among the recommendations made by the sportsmen assembled were:

The continuance of a three man commiss on. Two of the members to serve without salary, and the third to be executive chairman, in the places of the present executive secretary and chief game protector. The commission to be given full discretionary powers as to the opening and closing all seasons for hunting and fishing.

That the uncased gun provision in present law be changed to make prohibitive period concurrent with the game season, and so worded that it can be enforced.

To put the words "have in possession" in the present law forbidding the killing of squirrels out of season.

To have the purchaser of hunting and fishing license waive the requirements of a search warrant for an officer to search his premises for illegal game.

Necessary changes to permit the sale of game and fish raised commercially, provided the state has not furnished the stock; care to be taken that public fishing rights to a stream are not interfered with.

Legal limit of black bass raised to ten inches. Gigging of any kind of fish to be made unlawful.

Section relating to dogs chasing deer be corrected so that the law can be enforced. Also a careful examination of other sections to eliminate doubt in application.

No changes in license fees this time.

That the Commission in its discretionary powers, fix the season for all small game to open and close at the same time—November 1 to December 15, preferred. The deer season to be November 1 to 10. That all fishing in bass streams, except for trout, be prohibited during the bass spawning season.

That the commission employ sixteen full time game protectors in districted territory; that these men be capable, interested and experienced; that their appointment be non-political; that they be responsible to the executive chairman of the commission. That there also be employed six additional game protectors to work as a "clean up" squad in sections where violations are persistent. That six trappers be employed to kill varments in established game refuges and open territory. That the district protectors be uniformed officers similar to those employed in Pennsylvania

It was agreed that Attorney Alvin J. Barchs be employed to draft a bill embodying the above recommedations, and submit it for final approval at another meeting of all game and fish organizations to be held as soon after Christmas as possible.

The size of the game commission was thoroughly discussed at length. They talked about one commission to serve with salary, full time, and have comple e charge of administering the department. That was the plan in the start off of the game conservation business in this state; and all present are old enough to remember that we did not have much luck under such arrangement.

Then they talked about one full time commission with an advisory board of six appointed by the governor, one from each congressional district to meet with the commissioner for a conference only and have no voting power. This was put away as cumbersome, and ineffectual.

Another proposition was a board of seven commissioners; one from each congressional district, and a seventh at large; the seventh commissioner to be chairman and to serve full time with salary, replacing the executive secretary and chief game protector. This too was laid away as promising to be an unwieldly body.

Then T. M. Cheek came forward with the motion to recommend a commission composed of three members, as at present; two to serve without salary and the third to serve full time with salary, to be known as executive chairman and replace the positions of executive secretary and chief game protector. This met with approval.

It means economy in administration; it places responsibility of administration in a compact body; it gives the chairman room according to his strength, but does not make him dictator.

It is but right to say that all of these plans have been worked out satisfactorily in other states, and also that they have not been worked so well. It all depended upon the ability and zeal of the executive officer; his knowledge of and joy in his work; the backing he received by his board; the cooperation of the people: how little and how much he was hampered by political slings on his feet; and last but not least how much educetional work his predecessors had put over to enlighten people of an appreciation of and a responsibility for a beautiful countryside with trees and streams, alive with fish, birds and animals; good hunting and fishing incidental thereto.

Had I been present when the matter of the recommed about the sixteen district game protectors and the six flying squad protectors was being considered, I would have advised the gentlemen to go just a little easy on this line. The funds available for conservation work must be considered. While in Pocahontas county one person in every six purchase a hunting and fiseing license, the average for the state is something like one in twelve. This brings in less than $150,000—all the money the commission has for administrative purposes and for fish and game. From this a big divide is taken for the forestry division, to man towers, patrol the forests, fight fire and all. Then there is considerable of a fixed overhead in maintaining the several trout ponds and nurseries, bass ponds, distributions of fish and all that. If we clutter up the works by pinning on a police force through legislative enactment, we will just cut off that very considerable sum of money that could so well be used in restocking forest and field with game birds and animals

The point will be raised that what is the use of restocking without giving adequate protection. My reply is that all the king's horses and all the king's men could not throw protection around wild life in any community where there is no enlightened sentiment for its protection and preservation, but in every community there is now to be found young citizens who will take intefest in looking after any planting of game birds, fish and animals that the state will send to them. I know instances where those accused of taking a sporting chance to get game unlawfully out from under a warden's nose, who have proven best of guardians when intrusted with seed stock from the state.

I do not cotton to the idea of each department of state government maintaining its own special police force. We have local peace officers, grand jury, the efficient department of public safety, with state police in every county seat. This thing of enforcement officers for each brand of law builds up great, self-perpetuating political machines, and the expense runs us ragged. My idea is for the game commission to spend as much of the sportsman's license fee as possible in restocking field, forest and stream with game birds, animals and fishes; to devote energy in educating the people to the necessity of trees for the preservation of our country and climate—keeping it from becoming desert; to the economic value of wild life as a sure and steady source of financial return; to its recreational value; to cooperate with the department of public safety and to leave in their expert hands the matter of game law enforcement. It appears humanly impossible to keep the hands of any department free from the tar of politics where there are too many positions to be disposed of in the way of patronage.

Now don't throw the Pennsylvania proceedure up to me. Of course they have done well, but who could not do great things with the amount of money at the disposal of the game commission of our great northern neighbor. They have ten or more dollars to our one; they have already provided a supply of game to be protected and fed. With their great income they can afford the frills that have tangled us. I can say that in my own personal, private experience, the attempt to keep up a pace set by rich neighbors has done nigh ruined me. Even in Pennsylvania they appear to be rich enough to afford politics turfurah, but just look what a crime politics and boring with a big augur have put our state in.

Rather, see what great things Major Willis Robertson has accomplished with little money as the head of the conservation commission of the in the state, Virginia.

The proposal to confer the right of search and seizure upon any public officer, even willingly and voluntarily as a condition of granting hunting and fishing license, does not set well on this descendant of the sheep thieves, cattle raiders and killers of the King's deer of old Wales and Scotia. Talk about the stamp act and taxation without representation losing King George a country; why these were but talking points and minor aggravations compared with the real grievance—the searching for and seizure of contraband in the homes of the common people by the king's agents without due process of law. The second war with the motherland grew of high handed search and seizure on the high seas. Seems like them words have sinister sound in American ears. My idea in this game business is to hurt no ones feelings; to aggravate no one, but enlist the help, aid and cooperation of all. If they think we ought to sign a pledge, why just mark it down in the application for the license that a condition of the granting of this writ is that the party of the second part will do all that in him lies to keep perfectly game law in thought, word and behaviour: to set a good example to others, and ufge them to do likewise.

The gentlemen assembled in Charleston last Saturday suggested wisely in that they proposed no great changes in the present set up of organization and laws governing our conservation endeavors. In the past twenty years, we have seen nothing but change and small improvement. We have tried about everything, and the contemptation of half baked projects makes the heart sick. For instance, that expensive venture in a game farm in Upshur County; the pine tree nursery in Cabell county to supply trees for a hardwood state; the nice trout nursery at Petersburg, well equipped for the little trout, but the caretaker, our own Theodore Moore, shelt red in a two by four leanto, furnished with an asthmatic stove and an army cot; the great project for bass ponds in the Eastern Panhandle nearing completion, the beautiful Averill Trout nursery at Marlinton, partly completed; the ill advised venture in the publishing business; the commencing and abandonment of the pine tree nursery on the Seneca State Forest; the fine idea of state owned forests as game sanctuaries which began and ended in the Seneca State Forest of 11,000 acres, and the Watoga State Forest of 5,000 acres, both of which are in Pocahontas County, the erection of scores of steel lookout fire towers at thirty and more strategic points in the forest region of the state, and no money to man them in 1930, when the country burned up. Every legislature, every organization, every commission trying something new.

Now, in spite all the hedging and hampering on every side and hauling in every direction, you have to hand it to the present game commission that in the past two years they have cleaned house; they are bringing order out of chaos; it is one department of state government that has kept over head below income.

So the gentlemen acted wisely in suggesting to the legislature few changes in the game law set up, and to give the commisssion discretionary power—room according to their strength, as Uncle Remus has it.

Our Colored Friends

Sabbath School was well attended at both local churches on Sunday.

The pupils of the local school will give a Christmas program on Christmas night at the Baptist Church. The B. Y. P. U. will give an evening of entertainment at the Baptist Church on Tuesday night. Come out and enjoy yourselves.

The community singers will welcome the advent of Christmas with carols as usual. Send in your request numbers and we will be glad to favor you.

The many friends the Hon. T Edward Hill were deeply grieved to hear of his untimely passing at his home in Charleston. Mr. Hill was well known here having visited his sister, Mrs. Jessie Hill Mitchell, former principal of the local school. His passing is a loss not only to our group in West Virginia but to surrounding states. No other negro in the state has held as important positions and of him it has been said belongs the honor of being the most well informed negro in the State.

Miss Glenna A. Stewart, daughter of George Stewart, Seneca Trail won first place in the contest given by Boyd Junior Hill School, Charleston.

Word comes that Mary Gilmer Cash well, who has been seriously ill at her home in Covington, is much improved.

Winston Stewart, Henry Knapper and Enoch Lindsay have returned from a ten-day trip to Pendleton Co.

Mrs. Maria Black died at her home in Huntersville on Saturday morning and was laid to rest Sunday afternoon Brothers and sisters surviving are, Ira. Glenn and Boyd Daughtery, Addie Nichols, Effie Diggs, Elsie Gilmore and Willie A. Carter.

The Woman's Club held their regular meeting at the home of Mrs. C. B. Johnson last Friday evening. Routine business was transacted after which a buffet lunch was served.

Mrs. Ida Barnes is confined to her home by illness.

Mr. and Mrs Finley Morris announce the birth of a daughter.

Olivet Lindsay of Franklin is visiting his sister, Mrs. Winston Stewat.